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14 April 2003

Commissioner Kevin J. Martin Federal Communications Commission 445 12th Street SW Washington, DC 20554

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Distribution Center

Dear Commissioner Martin,

I am writing to respectfully ask that you join with and support Commissioners Copps and Adelstein in assuring that full and complete public hearings be included in the FCC's consideration of possible changes to the media ownership rules.

As a student and practitioner of communication theory, and believing that a free flow of information is essential in a healthy democracy, I believe that any changes that result in further consolidation or cross-ownership will directly harm the ability of individual citizens to obtain a full range of views and perspectives. To that end, I urge the FCC to resist pressures from the communication industry to weaken or eliminate current regulations.

In fact, I encourage the FCC to reconsider previous changes that have resulted in unhealthy consolidation of radio licenses and elimination of many locally-owned stations.

All the arguments I've heard or read to date to support the proposed changes have come from the industry that stands to benefit directly from them. I've yet to find a consumer-oriented organization that has taken a position in favor of medial consolidation. And this is quite telling, it seems, as the real objectives of consolidation are not to improve the quality of information but to increase the profitability of the media conglomerates who will gain even more control over broadcast outlets which properly belong to "the people."

Comments of Chairman Powell suggest that the burden of proof is on consumers to provide scientific evidence that media consolidation will be harmful. I suggest the burden should be on the media industry to give assurances that it will not. And I do not believe they can do so.

Thank you for your consideration, and I do hope that in all your deliberations and in your final vote you will find yourself acting in the best interest of the public you have been selected to represent and not the industry you are responsible for regulating.

Walt Machford

Sincerely,

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